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Letter to Brig. Gen. George McL. Presson from Gilbert M. Elliott regarding the Halifax Relief Party

Gilbert M. Elliott

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Ladies' College Hospital,
Halifax, N. S.
December 17, 1917.

From: O. C. Ladies' College Hospital.
To: The Adjutant General, Maine N. G.,
Subject: Halifax Relief Party.

1. This is to post you on the way things are going here. As I think you know, the Waterville party left here on last Saturday the 15th, four doctors, four nurses and two orderlies. Hennessey of Bangor left Saturday afternoon. Dr. Woods of Bangor left this morning. That leaves us with eleven Doctors, two Q. M. Corps' people from Maine in this Hospital. We have twenty-four C.A.M.C. nursing sisters on duty here and twenty-four N.C.O's and enlisted men of C.A.M.C. on orderly duty.
2. ~~Th~~We do everything they ask us to from the Medical Relief Committee. Their last request was "Are you able to care for Obstetrical cases" and I said right then "We can." "I am going to send you some pretty soon," said Col. Bell. When I told the Staff and head nurse they were inclined to throw a fit at me but so far we have not had any cases, which was just what I thought it would be.
3. We have been making all kinds of lists and reports and returns, in fact paper work generally and I think we are getting things straightened all right. They have promised to relieve us definitely by not later than the 23rd and probably on the 21st. If they do we get out of here on Saturday night. Barker, Thomas, and Cox leave on the night train on Wednesday the 19th. Garcelon leaves on the night train, Friday the 21st. So far as I can foresee the rest of us carry on until relieved by the Medical Committee. I have assured the Committee personally to Col. Bell and personally and officially to Capt. Goodman, who is acting as his Adjutant that we can carry this thing on if we have to and if they want us to, indefinitely, because I would ask you and the Governor to send us volunteer relief men from Maine to stay ten days or two weeks, but they have decided that they will take it over themselves. It is a pretty strenuous life but we will enjoy having done it when we look at it in retrospect.
4. As we hear stories of conditions it seems as if the whole thing grows more and more distressing. Lieut. Foster's story, which he got this morning, is that of all the Canadian soldiers returned from

overseas, only forty are totally blind. Up to date this catastrophe has given us a total of 150 totally blind and from what we know in our own Hospital and from what we hear from others there are some who have lost one eye and who must lose the other. This letter is in official form but is meant to be personal. I hope to see you pretty soon and in closing will sign myself as Mary Elliott used to when she was a little girl and was learning to write letters.

I luve you verry mutch,

Mary Elliott

The enclosed are copies of lists we made today for the Red Cross.